Action Plan has been formulated and circulated to the State Governments to enable them to respond quickly in the wake of natural calamities including earthquakes. Attempts are also made to minimise the loss by popularising earthquake resistant construction practices and through community education programme.

(d) Government of India have realeased Rs. 38.31 crores and Rs. 40.42 crores as Central share of State Calamity Relief Fund to Madhya Pradesh during 1996-97 and 1997-98 respectively. In the wake of the earthquake of 22nd May, 1997, an additional assistance of Rs. 45.26 crores was also released from the National Fund for Calamity Relief for relief and rehabilitation measures.

[English]

Land for Conservation in Wardha District

3155. SHRI VIJAY ANNAJI MUDE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is additional land available for conservation department in Wardha district unit;

(b) whether the Government of Maharashtra has made efforts to purchase this land for the conservation department;

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House soon.

[Translation]

New Technique for Paddy Crop

3156. SHRI RAMASHRAYA PRASAD SINGH :
SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "Kai ki madad se her jagah ugaya ja sakta hai chawal" appearing in 'Dainik Jagaran' dated July 7, 1997;

(b) if so whether any research work has been made in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there has been any increase in the production of rice due to use of algae in its cultivation;

(e) if so, the average per quintal increase in the production of rice per hectare; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government for the use of algae in rice cultivation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes Sir.

(c) The ICAR Institutes such as Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa; Central Rice Research Institute, Cuttack; National Facility for Blue Green Algae, Pusa, New Delhi; and State Agricultural Universities *viz.* Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore; Madurai Kamraj University, Madurai; Mahatama Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Pune; U.P. Council of Science and Technology, Lucknow are having programmes for extending the nitrogen fixation capacity of algae for improving soil fertility in rice fields. The above centres have identified suitable strains of Blue Green Algae (BGA) and developed technology for its multiplication under laboratory and field conditions.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The response of the application of BGA varies according to the climatic and soil situations. However, with the application of 10-15 kg/ha of soils based algae inoculation, 3-4 quintal per hectare increase in the production of rice can be obtained.

(f) The Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India has established several biological centres in the country which are basically engaged in the multiplication and distribution of cultures to the farmers. Training is also imparted to the development workers and farmers by the Central Government Agencies and State Agricultural Universities. Besides, some States have programmes for the multiplication and popularisation of BGA as in case of the State of Tamil Nadu. Further, since 1983, a National Biofertiliser project with headquarter at Ghaziabad is operating by Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India. This centre alongwith its six Regional centres is engaged in the production, distribution and testing of BGA in farmers' field.

[English]

Petro-Chemical Complex

3157. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state: